includes termination of dealerships, imposition of fines, suspension of supplies, warning etc.

Role of IT in food and farm marketing

611. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Food Corporation of India had organized a five-day conference emphasizing the role of IT in food and farm marketing;

(b) if so, the details of the participants in the meeting organization-wise and country-wise;

(c) the details of issues discussed in the meeting; and

(d) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Food Corporation of India alongwith Central Warehousing Corporation and National Cooperative Development Corporation jointly organized the Regional Workshop of Association of Food and Agricultural Marketing Agencies in Asia and the Pacific, an agency of FAO in India from 26th to 30th September, 2005 in New Delhi. The details of the participants organization-wise and country-wise is enclosed as Statement I (*See* below).

(c) and (d) During the course of five days Workshop, the participants made presentation in respect of their country/organization. The theme of the Workshop was "use of Information Technology in Food and Agricultural marketing in Asia". The Workshop discussed four technical papers and nine country reports *viz.*

(i) Information Technology in Food and Agricultural Marketing System in the Philippines,

(ii) IT Applications in Agricultural Marketing Services,

(iii) Business Process & IT Enabled Operation,

(iv) Information, Distribution and Management System-IT Application in Agricultural Marketing.

The participants also made a field visit to Mathura and Agra to observe the Indian Tobacco Company (ITC) (Private Sector) Initiatives in India on Information Technology (IT) application in Food and Agricultural Marketing System. The detailed conclusions and recommendations of the said Workshop is enclosed as Statement-II

Statement-I

List of Participants

Sl.No.	Name of Participant	Name of country	Name of the organization
	S/Shri		
1.	Sunder Raj Sharma	Nepal	Nepal Food Corporation
2.	Mukul Raj Styal	Nepal	Association of Food and Agricultural Marketing Agencies in Asia and the Pacific (AFMA)
3,	Ahadiah Mohd Khairi	Malaysia	Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority
4.	Frankie Dawin	Malaysia	Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority
5.	Mohammad Ismet	Indonesia	Bulog
6.	Aguj Dwi Iniarto	indonesia	Bulog
7.	Nelson C. Bueneflor	Philippines	QUEDANCOR
8.	W.D. Gunetileke	Sri Lanka	Food Department
9.	Nalin Munasinghe	Sri Lanka	Food and Agricultural Organization
10.	Ralph Houtman	Thailand	Food and Agricultural Organization, Bangkok
11.	Tow Aung Muint	Myanmar	MAPT
12.	Park Jae Min	South Korea	NACF
13.	G.H. Dhankar	India	AFMA consultant
14.	G.K. Motabar Losian	Bangladesh	Ministry of Food & Dis. Management
15.	P.P. Singh	India	Central Warehousing Corporation
16.	Sher Jagjit Singh	India	Central Warehousing Corporation
17.	I.C. Chadda	India	Central Warehousing Corporation
18.	Asit Singh	India	Food Corporation of India
19.	Asim Kumar Chakraborthy	India	National Cooperative Development Corporation

Statement-II

FAO/AFMA/INDIA REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL MARKETING IN ASIA, 26-30 SEPTEMBER, 2005, ASHOK HOTEL, NEW DELHI, INDIA

The FAO/AFMA/India Regional Workshop on Use of Information Technology in Food and Agricultural Marketing in Asia was convened at Ashoka Hotel Diplomatic Enclave, 50—B Chankyapuri, New Delhi-110021. India from 26th to 30th Sept. 2005.

Twenty-seven participants representing twelve member agencies from nine countries attended. The Workshop discussed four technical papers and nine country reports. It also made a field visit to Mathura and Agra to observe the ITC (Private Sector) Initiatives in India on Information Technology (IT) application in its agricultural marketing system.

The Workshop arrived at the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. In the liberalized market era, the major role of Public Sector food and agricultural marketing system is to provide a framework of enhancing development as a service provider and not of the controller/regulator. Traders in private sector should have a greater development role by providing professional management of markets.

2. IT has, among others, a major role in enhancing education among farmers in the following area:

(i) Standardization and Grading of food and agricultural commodities to facilitate e-trading/commerce;

(ii) Movement and flow pattern of food and agricultural commodities to enable decision making with regard to marketing at macro/micro level;

(iii) Certification system/specifications for domestic and well as export markets including imports;

(iv) Food Quality and safety issues for domestic and overseas markets for various food and agricultural commodities; and

(v) Organic cultivation/production, documentation and traceability of agricultural produce especially for overseas buy years to promote exports.

3. IT should be used in storing information required by farmers, traders, exporters, processors and transporters to facilitate retrieval by any body R&D institutions should put their findings on electronic media to facilitate easy accessibility by market participants.

4. The AFMA member agencies involved in food and agricultural commodities should have their own websites and on-line resource information with facility for generation of electronic reports.

5. Extensive use of IT should be encouraged to educate farmers in Good Agricultural Practices or Good Marketing Practices (GMP) including post harvest management especially for fresh (fruit and vegetables) produce.

6. Electronic market directory/atlas-commodity-wise, marketing functions/service-wise weather/rainfall-wise etc. should be make available for macro as well as micro-level to facilitate its use by all stake holders of food and agricultural commodities.

7. IT should be popularized in promoting direct marketing between producers and buyers *i.e.* traders, processors exporters, retail agencies, consumers including electronic auction system, for transport and efficient marketing and better net returns for the agricultural producers, as is being done in Korea, Philippines, Malaysia etc.

8. Farmers require more than 30 kind of information (portfolios to be delivered) such as weather, immigration, input availability, input prices, pest and disease control, commodity prices/markets, crop loans, insurance, licensing, registrations, credit, on-line sales/purchases, subsidies, promotional schemes, training, farmers markets etc. IT has a major role in providing all such kinds of information simultaneously to masses to improve decision making. Similarly businessmen and other market participants also require various kinds of reliable information, which can be regularly updated and provided through IT.

9. Electronic Display Boards at village levels with their connectivity to markets, weather departments and telephone connectivity are other IT

media to educate and inform the farmers. Considering the enormous task involved, this could be considered under Public Private Partnership to makea it finacially self sustainable.

10. IT has a wide role in Commodity Exchanges, Farmer Advisory Services and toll free access to prices/agricultural queries by farmers from time to time. This also covers future price projections/trends, information on infrastructure availability at micro level and in the markets. All kinds of static and dynamic information related to food and agricultural marketing need to be made available through IT.

11. Content generation to educate farmers to achieve desirable changes in knowledge, attitude, skills and behaviour of farmers in very crucial for its dissemination through IT. The workshop felt that food and agricultural price, which is useful to farmers should be regularly undertaken. This would facilitate forecast of prices based on price cycles and other relevant factors.

12. Grass root level research studies are required on what crops are produced? How much of local production is consumed locally? How much goes outside? How much of different crops comes from outside for local consumption? Such studies would help marketing extensionist to advise on product planning.

13. Micro-level studies on monitoring supply/demand of food and agricultural commodities are essential for marketing extensionist to educate farmers with regard to where to send? When to send? And in what form to sent which often confronts the farmers while taking marketing decisions.

14. Village level IT kiosks backed with proper marketing extension contents under both PPP and private sector should be encouraged to provide wider access to farmers for marketing technology and to achieve desirable change in their knowledge, attitude, skills and behaviour.

15. Multimedia CDs should be prepared on each and every aspect of food and agricultural marketing to educate farmers at village level itself.

16. The organizations dealing with individual or multiple aspects of food and agricultural marketing *viz.* transactional methods, storage, credit, standardization and grading, quality and safety of food, transportation,

import/export requirements. Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) measures etc. should take up educating producers through IT to enable them to enhance their income. For this purpose, they should develop their own websites/portals, which are freely accessible to farmers through village level IT kiosks. The participants however agreed unanimously that unless marketing extension enhances farmers net income, it will have no takers.

17. Many of the existing marketing extension information and knowledge, for example, lowest-highest prices, arrivals of produce and markets etc. are not readily usable by farmers for decision making. There is a need for a mechanism to translate such information in a user-friendly form for the benefit of farmers.

18. Apex R&D institutions in food and agricultural marketing should come together to develop farmer friendly contents for dissemination.

19. Agriculture being the backbone of economy in developing countries, infrastructure *viz* power, internet connectivity, teledensity, cheaper IT technologies etc. should be addressed by the Governments on priority for upliftment of farmers and rural people.

20. AFMA should consider launching its own website indicating good agricultural practices including post harvest practices based on feedback from all member countries to promote food and agricultural marketing.

Assistance to Himachal Pradesh

† 612. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the amount provided under different schemes to Himachal Pradesh during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) whether the fund was utilized for the same purpose by the State Government for which it was granted; and

(c) if so, the extent thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) A sum or Rs. 15 lakhs was sanctioned from the Consumer Welfare

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.